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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY #/

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COUNTRY Hungary

REPORT

SUBJECT Probable Political Alignments! *factions* DATE DISTR. 21 MAR 1958

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study

on the subject of probable alignments within the Hungarian government, as it was constituted in June 1957.

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2. The value of the study is somewhat diminished by the fact that some changes have occurred since it was written. On the other hand, much that is said about political figures and their relationships appears to have retained validity for those studying the background of Hungarian politics.

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Probable Alignment

The current government doesn't enjoy even that minimum independence that the Rakosi government had had. The Kadar government mirrors the directions given from Moscow. The government has no independent policy line; its single purpose is to consolidate its power, that is, to protect the positions of the individuals within the various government and party organizations. To this end, the government - and its individual members - needs to accomplish the following:

- A. Secure the confidence of the Soviet leaders,
- B. Find within the corresponding organization in the Soviet Union that person or those persons who will serve as patron to the Hungarian incumbent,
- C. Create within the country a foundation which will permit continued political survival.

A. The present government is a united one, in that every member of it swears full allegiance to the Soviets. Not one of these individuals has any important following within the country; even their few disciples and followers are unreliable; and therefore it is only by grace of the Soviets that they can maintain their posts. The Soviets today recognize what the situation in Hungary is, without any doubts or misconceptions. They know that they cannot win the country over to their side; therefore, they have been trying to set up a guard which will, on the one hand, be completely reliable from their viewpoint and, on the other hand, more or less acceptable in the eyes of the outside world. (That is why the Soviets have not brought back Rakosi and Geroe in person - only their flunkies.) The entire Hungarian government faithfully echoes the policies of the Soviet government; neither in theory or in practice does it broach any problem for which the Soviet has not already provided a practical solution (e.g., Stalin's rehabilitation, the kolkhozes, heavy industry, etc.). The individual members of the government, in the meantime, are outdoing each other in swearing fidelity to the Soviets. No independent initiative can be expected from them, because they quake with fear that Soviet confidence in them will be shaken.

B. Even if the individual members of the Kadar regime serve the Soviets with such enthusiasm, that does not mean that they are all united. In part individually, in part in small clusters, they are trying at all times to sniff out that individual, or those individuals, who, despite the continuing power struggle within the Soviet governments, can provide them with rear-guard protection. The current Hungarian government can be broken down into three groups: 1) the Kadar group; 2) the Muennich group; and 3) the APRO - Karoly KISS group.

1. Kadar continues to regard himself as a "centrist," and is today still trying to pursue his own version of the centrist line. His centrism consists of being opposed to Rakosi and Gero (he is afraid that these men or their followers will tumble him from power), and at the same time to Imre Nagy and his followers with the "right wing" policies - unless these latter do not join him. For he will forgive them anything, if they swear allegiance! There is a manpower shortage!

Probable Alignment

2

Kadar's most faithful retainer within the government is Bela BISZKU, Minister of Interior. (Failure to acquire this ministry was a serious blow to Muennich, since the post is now more important than ever. The APRO clique helped Kadar get this portfolio, since they felt that Muennich, what with his old-time Soviet connections, had to be reckoned with first. Moreover BISZKU had always worked in the party apparatus, almost always in Kadar's circle, and never had had any actual government experience; it was felt, therefore, that he would not be able to hold the post long and that Kadar would then have to let the ministry out of his hands. Also behind Kadar is NEZVAL, who at one time regarded himself as a disciple of Imre Nagy (although even during this so-called discipleship he did not hesitate to vote for Nagy's exclusion from the Party); now with complete sycophancy and witch-hunting, he is trying to make up for his past sins. He maintains good contact with Muennich and is also a good friend of Karoly KISS, with whom he has worked together for many years. Also a supporter of Kadar is Lajos FEHER, although he flew into a dudgeon when he did not get the portfolio for internal affairs. Still another Kadar man is Gyula KALLAI, a man with a future, since Khrushchev favors him and will reward him if he himself stays in power.

Marosán professes to be a Kadar man, obviously because he has confidence in Kadar's future; he himself has no role beyond that of a puppet, and is tolerated only so long as he does not try to take active part in the real issues of government. Kadar's chief follower in the party apparatus is Istvan FRISS, who is the top man in economic matters; FRISS has excellent connections with the top Soviet economic planners, having worked for years beside János VARGA.

Among the Soviets, the "centrist" SUSLOV supports Kadar. But also old-time Stalinists, like Molotov and Kaganovics, are his patrons; they had earlier been the protectors of the Rakosi-Csero company. Kadar's domestic policy is pure terror; his government does not shrink from employing the most unmerciful methods, and has proclaimed the struggle against the "weak-hearted and the uncertain."

2. Muennich and his followers now represent the mild course. Kadar was able to take the interior ministry out of Muennich's hands with the argument that he did not show enough unmercifulness in rounding up the counterrevolutionary remnants. Muennich has few followers among the top leaders. Former comrades [redacted] and some high-ranking police officers are his chief support within Hungary. At the same time, he is an old friend of Bulgainin's, and has first-rate relations with some of the functionaries now coming to the fore in Moscow. Again, at home, his chief ally is Gábor REVESZ, Minister of Defense. However, Muennich can count on Revess only so long as the Soviets do not give Revess new orders.

Even back in 1948, Muennich was anti-Rakosi, and the fact that he was able to stay out of trouble, and even maintain the posts that he did, can be attributed solely to his Soviet ties. Some of those who (reluctantly) are lining themselves up with him are former Rakosi retainers. They fear Kadar's wrath, and are seeking protection through alignment with one or the other of the other power leaders - Muennich or APRO.

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Probable Alignment

3

Paradoxically, the Stalinist member of the Central Committee have ranged themselves on the side of the anti-Stalinist-Bulganinite-Muennich policy; whereas the former anti-Stalinists, or Imre Nagy group, have sided with Kadar, the man who has rehabilitated the methods of Stalinism. From the government, Rakosi-ites have joined Muennich, first of all Imre Horvath, who also has Russian connections, principally the NKVD. Muennich's most trustworthy man is Istvan TOEMPE, deputy minister of the interior, who is not, however, on particularly good terms with BISZKU. Other Muennich men are Lajos Cseby, ambassador to Belgrade; Laszlo Matyas, former chief of the reorganized political police, and now in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Jozsef Scatary, deputy chief of the attache' division with the Ministry of Defense. The strength of this group is not much; Muennich is old and not of fighting temperament; and now that he had been deprived of the ministry of interior, he is no longer feared.

3. Nor does Apro fear Muennich. Antal Apro formed a joint clique with Karoly KISS, and together in the apparatus they are the strongest. Kiss holds the arty organization in his hands, while Apro's men sit in key positions in the trade unions. The antagonism is strong between the Kadar and Apro groups, since Apro, and particularly Kiss, wants to salvage the whole former government retinue, and has in good part already succeeded in this. It is not very likely that Kadar will be able to break through this coalition of forces. Also on the KISS-APRO team is SOMOGYI, who carries great weight in the trade unions.

There is also a wavering group within the government, which does not take part in political and clique maneuverings, and whose chief concern is to protect their positions and draw from them all the material benefits that they can. Not a few among them are, strictly speaking, anti-communists (INCZE, MACZONI, TRAUTNER); TAUSZ, as a one-time Social Democrat, is happy to still be a minister, and DOLESCHALL, as an old-time opportunist, simply wants to live well. They fluctuate among the power groups, and servilely carry out their orders. Their Soviet contacts are chiefly through the advisors, but these too, can be helpful to them.

C. In order to demonstrate its value, and even its indispensability, in the eyes of the Soviets, and in order to strengthen its position internally, each group is constantly trying in some way to creat for itself a basis of mass organizations. Kadar's chief support is the AVH. It was common knowledge that Kadar, like Muennich, was an enemy of the Avh; yet now with material inducements, rehabilitations, illegal release of jailed AVH men, and heapings of praise, he is wheedling his former prison-guards and torturers. He cannot do anything else; the Soviets always measure the value of their puppets by their standings with the political police.

The APRO-KISS group, mainly through KISS' influence, can claim the party apparatus as their own; at the same time, the leaders of the trade union can also be included in their circle. Muennich, meanwhile leans toward the army for support. This means that among the leaders there are officers who are his followers, with the mass of the army that which it was in October 1956. Muennich also has many men in the Police, because these look with antipathy on Kadar's reign of terror and the growing influence of the revived AVH.

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In the true meaning of the term, there is no "policy line" in the current government. And there will be none in the future, either; for no matter how deteriorated the morale atmosphere in Hungary, no matter how much denunciation takes place, the populace will continue to reject the Kadar regime.